

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 113.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1856.

PRICE 1½d.

LITTLE UPHOLSTERERS.

THERE has for some time been a growing interest in the condition of that portion of our juvenile population inhabiting the debatable land lying between the dominions of poverty and crime: the access from the former to the latter being so easy, and rapid, and frequent, that the attention of the wise, the great, and the philanthropic has been aroused, to endeavour to withdraw the young, if possible, from ground so dangerous. To those whose minds take pleasure in successful results from such efforts, the facts related here will be welcome. They refer to the working of an establishment in London, in which girls have been employed whose training commenced in a Ragged School.

In this institution, the experiment has been made to furnish remunerative employment to this class of girls, and, at the same time, to arouse them from their state of apathy and ignorance; to carry on their education, begun in the Ragged School; to awaken in them good dispositions; to form them to good-manners; and to engage their intelligent and hearty co-operation in plans devised for their benefit, and which aim at their gradual, however slow, emancipation from abject poverty.

The director and founder of the institution is a gentleman whose life is one continuous dedication of a large fortune, of time, and of talents, to public good. Desirous of giving employment to those to whom employment is so great a boon, he, in the winter 1854-5, purchased from a lady her patent for the manufacture of dolls' furniture. These beautiful toys, now known as Patent Art Toys, were exhibited by the patentee in 1851: they formed the furniture of the Tudor Villa which gave so much pleasure to the juvenile visitors of the Great Exhibition; and it is in the manufacture of these articles that the young workers of whom we are about to speak are employed. Specimens are now before us; they are of great durability, and extremely elegant; and we are not surprised to learn that they find ready customers among the juvenile aristocracy and gentry.

The workshop of this industrial establishment presents the spectacle of several girls between the ages of eight and seventeen. Some may be seen cutting and twisting into the required form the wire which forms the framework of each article; others are covering the frames with mimic carvings, moulded in composition; others staining and varnishing the composition; others are stuffing sofas and chairs, for their neighbours to cover with brilliant satin or velvet; whilst others, again, are employed on beds which the proudest of dolls

might be proud to possess; and, lastly, some of the elder ones with beaming eyes pack up, and with steady importance carry off to the Soho Bazaar, the neatly finished and attractive work. All are busy—all look cheerful.

The same sort of wire-frame used for the dolls' furniture likewise serves to mount many objects of great beauty for ladies' use—such as teapot-stands, pin-trays, &c.; the stand or tray itself being of painted glass, rendered sufficiently solid by a patent process. The production of this painted consolidated glass forms another department of the institution. In this department, ladies are employed who have been thrown on their own resources for support—the establishment thus doing the double service of employing educated women and destitute children. Let us, however, for the present, leave the ladies' department, and confine ourselves to that of the children.

Their earnings are from two to ten shillings weekly; the working-hours are from half-past eight to four; the hours for lessons, from four to six o'clock. There is a drawing-class one evening in the week, and the workers assemble on one evening to listen to the reading of some interesting book. Out of the working-hours, three-quarters of an hour are allowed for dinner—a meal to which the girls sit down with propriety and cheerfulness, but not until they have sung a verse, which falls very pleasingly on the ear, the young voices uttering in slow and sweet melody a simple strain of expressions of grateful content. The homes of these girls are poor and miserable; or if not so, are in the neighbourhood of horrible abodes. Some are so dirty, the lady-visitor is afraid to enter them. Some, however, are admirably clean in the midst of surrounding squalor and filth, and the occupants of these consider dirt a great disgrace. This feeling was once exemplified at a geography lesson. The children, required to give a description of London, said it was 'a very crowded place; you could hardly breathe.' When asked if the houses were not dirty, they fired up, and did not like the stigma, until the teacher said, 'I mean outside.' To exchange, however, during the day, the very best of these homes for the lofty workshop, lighted from the top, warm, clean, and well ventilated, is highly beneficial to the health of the workers.

The children used to bring dinner with them when they came to work. Sometimes it happened that a girl was sent dinnerless by her mother as a punishment; or, if the mother was in a bad temper, the girl had not dared to ask for dinner or for money to buy any. The appetite of these children was vitiated: they preferred fat and heavy food, and hot

and peppery; many, if trusted to purchase their own dinner, bought what seemed to satisfy them most, but which disagreed with them. The very name of some of these viands is unknown beyond their own class. For all these reasons, it was deemed advisable to provide a cheap and wholesome dinner in their work-room, which one of the girls should cook. This was accordingly done, at the rate of 2d. each daily, the shilling for the next week's dinners being paid in advance, on Saturday, from their wages. For this sum, they had stewed meat three times a week, and potatoes and pudding three times—the puddings being of rice, suet, batter, macaroni, apple, &c. The health of the children visibly improved, and they grew fatter, and more lively, and strong. The arrangement was a great relief to the mothers, who eagerly availed themselves of it. The above estimate is for fourteen girls; the cost to each individual must vary according to the number who share the meal, and diminishes in proportion as that number augments.

In a letter from one of these working-girls to a friend in the country, a Christmas-pudding makes a very amiable figure, especially when we consider that the said luxury was bought with the well-earned money of the writer. She says: 'My dear little brother is getting on very well indeed. On Christmas-day, he had some plumpudding for the first time in his life, and he do like it so!'

Their conversation sometimes degenerates into discussions on food, but their patient abstinence is wonderful and pathetic. It is remarkable that they never allow a meal to draw them away from occupation which interests them, or from amusement. For instance, the drawing-class is held in the evening. When asked to go to it, some who are indifferent may answer, 'they can't be starved, and they haven't had their tea;' but some are very much in earnest, and if they have not brought their tea, will forego it rather than miss the lesson.

The children have been encouraged to save a portion of their earnings. They can withdraw their little store at any hour; which, when done, is invariably in order to put it to some rational use. At first, it was quite a new idea to accumulate money for any purpose—if they did not earn enough in one week for the object they had in view, they seemed to consider its attainment utterly and for ever impossible. In regard to money, as well as to other matters, they cannot originate a plan; it is not even enough to suggest one to them; but carry it out with them, and they will repeat it of their own accord, and without you; still requiring, however, as yet, some one to keep up amongst them the right spirit.

The mothers employ their younger sons and daughters in household work, regarding the earnings of these industrial girls as considerable enough to entitle them to have their evenings free, which gives a great field for the labours of the instructor. One of the most satisfactory events which we have to record, is a meeting of the mothers, called in the hope of establishing some communion between them and the institution—all the influence and regulations of which, it was felt, should suit home-arrangements and harmonise with home-duties. The mothers expressed themselves most grateful for what had been done, and manifested an intense and truly laudable desire for the education of their daughters.

The latter are treated with greater respect and kindness at home, in consequence of contributing to the general fund. They enjoy a measure of independence, and a comparative exemption from blows, hard words, and starvation. It seems to be considered their right to be taken out to see sights—as the Crystal Palace, for example—or to visit town or country friends, and to have little treats—as, for instance, a party on a girl's birthday, if she was in work.

The difficulty of finding employment for this class of girls is very great, and yet, unless it be found, the good work begun in the Ragged School stops short; nor stops short only, for it is scarcely possible that these young creatures—thrown on the world to battle with its temptations, and endure its worst privations, in homes where dirt dwells, from which beauty is banished, which knowledge ignores and hope shuns—should not sink back again into that atmosphere of physical and moral degradation out of which the Ragged School snatches, and for a while upholds them. Their almost only resource is to become little nurses or maids-of-all-work; in either case, they are overworked and ill rewarded—receiving for the most part no wages, and compensated only by being fed, and that badly.

On the other hand, it is hardly possible to over-estimate the advantage of their becoming workers. We have noticed the effect it has on their relations with their home; but that which it exercises on their own being and character is infinitely more important and admirable. In the workshop are developed qualities which are the foundation of morality; as perseverance, steadiness, punctuality, energy, the power of application, and the habit of self-control—the workers being compelled to resist any inclination to idleness, from whatever cause such inclination may arise—be it illness, excitement, the reaction after excitement, or the wish to do something else which is not their immediate duty. The effect of manual labour, too, is tranquillising, and its tendency is to soften rude boisterousness of spirits while the faculties are sharpened; and when, as in the case before us, the manufacture is elegant, the taste is developed and improved.

Moreover, it is an advantage of the purely mechanical occupation in which these children are employed, that a great deal of indirect teaching and pleasure can go on simultaneously, and without interrupting work. They have learned poetry while at work, are very fond of singing, and sing in chorus or alone the hymns and songs learned in the Ragged School. They are fond, too, of hearing poetry, and of hearing singing, and have been much interested in learning the classification of animals into mammalia, &c., the habitat and properties of plants. Such a petition as this to the young lady who presides in their room is not unfrequent: 'Miss O—, tell us about Switzerland,' or 'tell us about Italy.' A very few facts originating in horror at a spider, have served to arouse a lively interest in insects. They like to have an object brought into the room, and which then becomes a theme; they enjoy the feeling of knowledge, the perception that in an object of sight there is something they cannot see. They manifest the greatest delight to come a second time upon a fact, as when in the school-room they are given a piece of information which they have previously heard in the work-room: the first time, the fact is comparatively nothing; but when it is confirmed from another source, the belief is strengthened, and the joy extreme.

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Experience has proved that the children listen eagerly during working-hours to subjects to which at any other time they would not pay attention—the reason being, that these subjects are more interesting than their own thoughts; and although one would be far from wishing to substitute this kind of teaching for the more regular, connected, and methodical, yet it has been found a most valuable accessory to the latter, as a means of awakening interest; and when there is so little time to be given to regular studies, the addition of the working-hours is an important one.

All write well, and their improvement in that is probably owing to their having had their hands in use since infancy. In choosing copies, some like facts about animals, some poetry, and some texts from Scripture: the taste for poetry prevails. The favourite lesson is a lesson in descriptive geography, which they write out from memory. Some of them prefer the north countries, and some the south. Of the south, one only gets an idea gradually—it is something like an atmosphere: descriptions of northern countries can be presented to the child more as a picture. They manifested a great desire to come to the lesson on England, but they all declared they could give no account of it to a foreigner; all they knew of its productions was, that oak-trees grew in it.

A library has been collected, partly out of their own contributions. They pay a half-penny weekly towards the cost of copy-books, out of which there is occasionally a shilling or so to spare, which is spent in books for the library.

One evening in the week is always spent in reading to them. The authors they prefer are Mrs Howitt and Tennyson. '*The May Queen, New Year's Eve*, and the *Charge of the Light Brigade*, had long been favourites with them,' said our informant; 'and when they found these poems were by one man, you should have seen their burst of delight!' There was the same pleasure at discovering that their favourites among Mrs Howitt's works were by one hand. The individuality of authors was quite a new idea to them. They like anything touching; such as songs about blind people, &c., and a new poem is a great delight. Mrs Gaskell and Anna Ross are favourites; but perhaps no story has charmed them more than Mrs Harriet Myrtle's *Water-lily*. They dislike all classes of fairy tales, thinking them silly and untrue—thus proving that they do not like the physically impossible; but they delight to realise another's life, provided it is or might be true. In reading *The Old Curiosity Shop*, they each chose to be one of the characters. Before arriving as far in the story as the marchioness, one girl, supposing she was some one very grand and beautiful, decided that her favourite Miss O— should be the marchioness. Judge of her astonishment on seeing the fact! She thus writes to a young lady: we will give the whole epistle:

DEAR MISS M— I hope you are getting better, and likewise your mamma is quite well. I hope you will be soon able to leave your room, and take short walks in the country. Our lessons are getting on very nicely. We have heard about the little marchioness, and my dear Miss O— shall not be her; but dear Miss O— has chosen to be Nelly's brother; but I do not like it, and I get very cross and indignant about it. I will wait till the book is finished, and I will give Miss O— the best name. Will you excuse this short letter? When you are well enough to write to me, will you write me that piece of poetry you repeated to us—

As slow our ship her foamy track?

MISS O— sends her kind love to you.

Good-bye; I am, yours affectionately,

L— G—.

In the summer, instead of reading to them in the

evenings, they were taken to Hampstead, Highgate, &c. Many of them had hardly ever been in the country before, and none of them had ever noticed flowers: they thought all leaves were green, and all of the same form; they had noticed that flowers were of different colours, but not that they differed in form; they called every flower 'a flower,' and knew it by no other name; they knew not that plants had roots, and for a long time implored to stick the stalks into the earth, 'just to see if they would live;' they had no idea of the growth of plants, nor had any notion that a bud became a flower. But now, in these summer-evening walks, led to observe and encouraged to enjoy, no one can imagine their delight at finding the different sorts of flowers growing in one field, to see that in one fair expanse there were assembled daisies and butter-cups, clover, bugloss, forget-me-not, white deadnettle, water-ranunculus, &c. One girl had made artificial flowers, and was delighted to make here her first acquaintance with the originals.

Another, who had only once before been in the country, now in this glorious field wandered away by herself, and, seated on a bank, with her feet over the water, selected and arranged a bouquet of grasses and flowers with the most exquisite taste: here she sat, with bright eyes and flushed cheeks, humming a low air, and could hardly be persuaded to come away. The disappointment of the girls was great to find their mothers did not care for wild-flowers: it was quite sad. Since that time, so much has their taste been developed, and their power of observation stimulated, that they now go out into the country in little parties, to gather flowers and collect objects which they bring to the work-room, with a request to be told all that can be learned about them.

These country-walks, and some visits to different ladies in the country, who have kindly entertained them at their houses, have produced, amongst other circumstances, one happy change in these children. It may be said that all their dates were marked by misfortunes. Asked, 'When did such a thing happen?' the reply used to be: 'Oh, it was when my father was out of work;' or, 'The year mother had such a job to get us dinners.' Illnesses and deaths were very frequent dates; but this year they mark their epochs in some such way as this: 'It was before we went to Romford,' or 'to Willesden;' 'after Miss O— came home,' or 'since the Concert.'

It is worthy of note that these children have no respect whatever for rank; their reverence is for goodness. One girl said she would like to see the king of Sardinia. The others began to rally her, and assert 'they didn't care for kings and great folks. They wouldn't go to see the Queen; the Queen wasn't made of gold—she wasn't better than other people.' When their teacher explained to them that kings and queens had very important functions, and it was interesting to see any one who had performed any great or good action, or might do so if they chose, the children seemed to assent.

The obedience which has been obtained is perfect; by what manner of spirit let one little incident shew. S— J—, who had been idle, was desired to come and stand by Miss O—, to do her work. She did not stir. Irritated by this contumacy, one of the girls exclaimed: 'Why don't you box her ears, Miss O—?' 'Oh, I should never think of doing such a thing as that,' was the answer. It brought S— J— instantly to her side, to pursue her work with the greatest diligence.

We shall not omit to record one unmistakable indication of the progress these children are making, in the fact, that they are importunate to be instructed in the New Testament; even those of them who were formerly not only indifferent, but to whom it was distasteful. Thus, with happiness, and intelligence, and awakened hope, the expanding natures of these lowly

children of toil open to the beams of religious truth and love.

Unostentatiously, and in silence, now for upwards of a year, has this little germ of a great work been growing—the work which lies before society of employing and educating the female poor. Reader, go and see—go and help.

THE THEORY OF THE GYRFALCON.

'THE World of Birds,' a passionate ornithology, proceeding from the eccentric and amusing pen of M. Toussencel, has found so many admirers, and made so many proselytes on the southern side of the English Channel, that it is worth while indulging our readers with a glimpse of a literary performance of such bold originality, especially as it will help them to understand many passages in French romances and journals of the day which would otherwise seem to be enveloped in a hopeless veil of mysticism. The only preface necessary is the statement, that the opinions immediately to be detailed are not put forth in joke and irony, but are seriously and sincerely entertained, not only by our author, but by a great number of clever and well-educated men and women; or, as it will appear we ought to say on the present occasion, by a great number of clever and well-educated women and men.

It is at once confessed, that the history of the birds of France is only the pretext and apparent object of this curious volume. But the work does not the less profess to be a complete treatise on passionate ornithology—that is to say, a treatise in which the manners and customs of the birds of France are described with scrupulous fidelity, without reckoning a multitude of hitherto unpublished analogical details; only, the world of birds is nothing but the accessory subject, while the world of man is the principal topic. With these preliminary sentences, and a hint to the reader not to be unnecessarily startled should he light upon an odd-looking word or sentence, we will at once endeavour to learn what instruction is to be gained by listening to the language of birds.

Birds love much—some of them love always. They are the tribe of creatures privileged by their Maker; for the favour of Heaven towards every creature is measured by the power of loving which has been conferred upon it. And as the Deity does nothing by halves, He has been careful to lavish upon these charming creatures the gifts requisite to cause them to be loved. On the mantle of the humming-bird, the peacock, the bird of paradise, and the golden pheasant, He has profusely scattered rubies, sapphires, emeralds, topazes, the most brilliant and the best assorted tones of the gamut of colours. In like manner, He has selected from the gamut of sounds the sweetest notes to accentuate the voice of the humble singing-bird. With the exception of man, birds are the only creatures that are able to render thanks to God in joyous songs; but the heart, both of man and bird, must be happy before the voice can sing. Prayer is happiness expressed in song.

And as love is a passion of luxury, which requires, as the fundamental condition of its complete expansion, a warm atmosphere, and a clear and limpid sky, God has given the bird the faculty of rapid locomotion, which permits it to follow the course of the sun, and to realise the utopia of an eternal spring. The swallow and the turtle-dove, those happy models of conjugal fidelity and attachment, live in equal ignorance of inclement seasons and of cold hearts. Love is an easy indulgence for birds; because, amongst their ranks, none are to be found who are less handsome or less rich. They are already in the condition which mankind will enjoy when the phase of harmony arrives. The life of a bird is one long epithalamium.

Love, which has gifted the male with dazzling plumage and with corresponding vocal powers, has been still more bountiful with regard to the female. Hers is the monopoly of the labours of art—the privilege of genius, of wisdom, of devotion, and of courage. Her soul is enriched with all the treasures of sentiment and intelligence, as the person of her partner has been adorned with all the colours of the rainbow. The female chooses the position of the nest, and the choice is almost always made with admirable discernment. These master-pieces of elegance, solidity, and skill are the exclusive result of female labour. It is only as a special mark of favour, and as a reward of good conduct, that the male is allowed to co-operate in the workmanship of the edifice. The sole exceptions to this rule are to be found in certain families that are ennobled by monogamy, in which the husband is the perfect model of conjugal virtue. The male swallow has thus earned, by his rare merit, the right to exercise, conjointly with the female, the mason's trade. No one can imagine how highly little birds honour labour. The glorification of labour is the foundation of their whole policy. If the legislators of human societies had the least consciousness of their mission, they would always endeavour to take pattern by the birds. There are only two methods for nations to be happy: the first, to be governed by analogists; the second, and the surest, not to be governed at all.

In a family of feathered bipeds, it is a thing unheard of that a mother should voluntarily abandon her little ones. Cases of infanticide, so common with the sow, the rabbit, and man, are of such extreme rarity amongst birds, that learned men of the highest authority aver that no such thing ever takes place. And if infanticide is a crime unknown to birds, charity, on the other hand, towards foundling children, is practised with a fervour which puts our philanthropy to shame. Place a poor little fatherless and motherless sparrow outside your window, and all the fathers and mothers of the neighbourhood will throng around him to contribute their mite. The virtues of birds form an inexhaustible theme; and the reason of its inexhaustibility, is the lead which the females take amongst them.

Now, in our ardent thirst after justice and happiness, we honour the bird for his courage—which we men have not as yet acquired—in professing his passionate opinions boldly, and in proclaiming the superiority of the sex which attracts over the sex which is attracted. The bird is, in fact, of all beings gifted with speech, the first which has declared in plain terms: '*The happiness of individuals, and the rank of species, are in direct proportion to the feminine authority.*' Man would not have made the discovery of so simple a theory, and one which contains so many things in so few words; amongst others, the secret of happy destinies and the law of pivotal movement. In passionate ornithology, we call this theory **THE THEORY OF THE GYRFALCON**. The gyrfalcon is a magnificent white bird with golden eyes. It is the strongest, the handsomest, and the bravest of the falcons. The race of falcons is a chosen race, as remarkable for its courage and intelligence as for its power of wing, and was naturally the first to ally itself to man. The gyrfalcon stands at the head of the order of superior birds, and is the mouthpiece of the immense majority of species at every important solemnity.

If we draw a parallel between woman and man, it is the former who gains throughout by the comparison. A poet would say, that if God has made woman smaller than man, it was in order to finish her more perfectly. Her superiority has no need to be demonstrated; it is read at first sight on her rosy and velvet cheeks, on her fine and satiny skin, which is without a vestige of animal pilosity; whilst the skin of man retains, by its hairiness, all the characters of the

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covering of a beast. On this account, woman alone bears in her aspect the stamp of humanity. Man, then, is more *animal*; woman, more *human*. Man is more carnivorous; woman, more herbivorous, and, therefore, less impure; for carnivorousness is an aberration of humanity, and a semi-return to the diet of beasts.

Good sense, and wit, which is the gaiety of good sense, are essentially feminine. The Germans call good sense *mutterwitz*—that is, mother-wit. The entrance of a single clever woman into a family, is sufficient to un-simpleton it for several generations. Man seeks blindly after the light; woman retains the spark within her. Woman is poetry; man is prose. For man, says Carus, religion is intellect and truth; for woman, it is faith and love.

One ornithological fact is sufficient to settle the question of the precedence of the sexes; and it is wonderful that naturalists, without being very sharp-sighted, have not discovered it before. This fact is, the faculty which all old hens, that are sick either in mind or body, have of transforming themselves into cocks, when they are good for nothing else; that is, when they have lost the power of laying. It constantly happens that a hen entering the decline of life, whether worn out by the tribulations of maternity, or from any obscure physiological cause, suddenly renounces the attributes of her sex, abdicates humility and gentleness, and puts on the quarrelsome character and the brilliant costume of the cock. Crowing hens in our poultry-yards, and crowing hen-pheasants in our woods, are equally common phenomena. From all which, it clearly results that cock-hood is the last resource of hens.

Art is the incarnation of the ideal. Now, man has never had, and never will have, any other than a feminine ideal—the angel, or the Virgin Mary. Virginity and maternity are two such ravishing, such poetic aspects of the same face, that man is impelled by the aspirations of his eternal love to unite them, whether he will or not, in one and the same type—a type divine.

God has delivered the world into the hands of races of the German stock, who made it a duty to honour woman. The most powerful of these nations is England, where the sceptre is in the hands of a woman, and whose most illustrious monarchs are named Elizabeth, Anne, Victoria. The Russian Empire, which is the next in power to the British, is an empire of mixed blood, but whose sovereigns are also women, Elizabeth and Catherine. If the fortunes of France are inferior to those of England or of Russia, it is the fault of the Salic law, which, under the pretext of preventing the sceptre from being converted into a distaff, has placed the nation under the degrading rule of mistresses, and has deprived it of Elizabeths the Great and Catherine the Great, to inflict upon it the Maintenons and the Pompadours. The only way for France to rise to the highest rank, is to place her destiny in the hands of her women, who are as much superior to the women of Russia and of England, as her public men are inferior to the official personages of those two countries. What a singular reconciliation of difficulties, and one which perhaps has never struck anybody but M. Toussenel, amongst all those who have investigated the causes of the grandeur and the decline of empires! The English and the Russian nations, the two most powerful countries in the world, are precisely those in which man takes the most pains to make himself resemble woman—the Englishman, by incessant shaving; the Russian, by thickly padding his chest!

Why do the Iroquois and the Yankee of the present day respectively occupy the two extreme steps of the social ladder? Why is the last of the Iroquois on the point of dying of starvation, and of disappearing from the surface of the very same land on which the Yankee

has contrived to find the elements of an almost fabulous prosperity? Because, amongst the cannibal Iroquois, woman was a degraded slave, subjected to all kinds of painful labour; whilst North America, to which all Europe is just now emigrating, is the only country in which woman is enfranchised from hard labour, where she is honoured and considered as the equal of man, and where they have begun to restore her to the enjoyment of her political rights.

Since the happiness of human societies is measured by the scale of the liberties of woman, it is clear that politics, which are the art of making people happy, consist exclusively in extending those liberties. A new-born babe would arrive at this conclusion.

And now let us come to the practical inference which is drawn from the premises, of which the above is only a small portion. M. Toussenel thus addresses his countrywomen and countrymen, and we only wait to see how long it will be before the nation is converted to his principles:

Noble children of the beautiful land of France! sons of the land of love and glory! let us hasten to return to the suggestions of our Germanic nature, which tells us that 'in woman all wisdom lies.'

Since every one of our revolutions has been ruined by the interference of aged men, let us profit by the teaching of our errors, and for the future absolutely reject their co-operation.

Since our revolutions have been thus abortively attempted in the name of the imprescriptible rights of man alone, let us make one revolution, by way of experiment, in the name of the imprescriptible rights of woman, just to see whether she will not succeed better than we have done.

Since pleasure is the only compass which our reason possesses to guide us towards the pole of our destiny; since balls are the only public assemblies in which men know how to behave themselves decently, let us model our institutions upon the plan of a ball-room, in which woman is despotic queen.

Since the birds, as well as Tacitus and Robert d'Arbrissel, declare that the custom of worshipping woman, and consulting her upon every important subject, is the source of every virtue, the mainspring of all great actions, and the guarantee of all success, let us have the courage to restore and honour the practice of our German ancestors. Let us not confine ourselves to gilding the chain of our slave; let us break it. Let us make the spirit of our manners actually enter into our code; and let us inscribe on the title-page of the fundamental law the immortal declaration of Carus: 'Woman is; man becomes.' What is, is sure; what becomes, is uncertain.

Since God has granted to woman the exclusive privilege of exciting enthusiasm in men, and of softening lions by the charm of speech—gifted as she is with tears in her voice, magnetic fires in her look, and other talismans of irresistible seduction; such as white teeth, expressive nostrils, and the still more magic gift of betraying the invisible impulses of her soul by the visible palpitations of her bosom—let us restore to woman what belongs to her; let us open the tribune to female orators, that we may know for once what eloquence is.

Let us return, as soon as possible, to true universal suffrage—to that from which woman will not be excluded; and to the system of two Chambers—one of men, the other of women; the first of which proposes, only the second disposes. This hierarchy is in the order of things; since sentiment, which is the lot of woman, is the sovereign criterion of equity, and pronounces judgment from a higher eminence, and from a greater distance than science, which is the lot of man.

Without coming to this, there is no safety; for it is written that society cannot be perpetuated without

woman; and history and the birds teach us that God has refused durability to every institution in which woman, the pivot of attraction, does not occupy the first place.

The institution of a female Legislative Assembly is the death-wound of brutal force; the funeral-knell of the sabre and leather-breaches; the sentence of imposture, corruption, and venality; the end of corporal and mental prostitution; the dawn of harmony; the era of clemency, justice, and charity—when crimes and their punishment shall disappear, and society will spontaneously hold together, in virtue of the miraculous power of the same principle of attraction which sustains the circling globes in space. The complete realisation of ærial navigation only waits for this great day of restoration.

The institution of a female parliament in France would be the revival of the arts, of pleasures, and eternal fêtes; the electric explosion of liberty and happiness over the entire surface of the earth; the universal embrace of all nations, of all classes, and of all ages; the reign of love and brotherhood, whose advent will cause the planets to tremble with gladness, as they swim in their orbits round the sun.

And M. Toussend prays to live to witness all these things come to pass! For our part, we pray that our *Journal* may live to report them when they do; but, in the meantime, we would suggest that, since the Theory of the Gyr Falcon is too pleasant to be untrue, the promoters of the Half-Saturday and Early-closing Movements are losing time: they should go in at once for a holiday that shall last for ever.

THE ENEMY IN ENGLAND, AND HOW HE CAME FROM ODESSA.

It is a comfortable thing to have our wars fought on foreign soil. Double taxes and high provisions are evils, to be sure; but they are nothing to speak of when compared with the inconveniences of an enemy in our fields, burning our barns, and blowing our houses about our ears. Throughout our present war, therefore, although Englishmen are not accustomed to receive an enemy on their own shores, much solicitude has been shewn in contemplating the possibilities of such an occurrence: our coast-defences have been put in order; coast-guardsmen have been commanded to 'make ready'; and other prudent measures have been adopted to guard against the accidents of war. But what if all this preparation of ours is too late? what if the enemy is already on our shores, spreading devastation over our fields?

The seaport town of Odessa, embowered in its beautiful gardens and vineyards, stands on its limestone cliff, a fertile oasis on the edge of the dreary steppe; its palace-like magazines of corn and flax have long formed an attraction to the mercantile nations of the West. English ships have found shelter under its moles, while Odessa ships have found a hearty welcome on the shores of England.

From this port, alike famous in the annals of peace and of war, an expedition was sent in the year of grace 1836, and safely landed on the west coast of Ireland, at Westport, in the county of Mayo—an obscure and distant port, wisely chosen by an insidious foe. A small consignment of flax-seed was sent on shore, and received, we presume, without the formality of a flag of truce, for the nations were not then jealous of each other's integrity. It was the visit of a friendly tribe for purposes of barter. But in that bag of flax was hidden a Russian enemy, who has since spread his armies abroad over the plains of England, and devastated our fields with even a greater, because more permanent, devastation than that which appertains to fire and sword.

The enemy in question is a pernicious form of vegetable life known to botanists under the name of *Cuscuta*, but more familiarly characterised in different parts of the country by the name of Dodder. It presents itself in the form of a mass of elastic matted threads, which invest our crops of flax and clover, and live at their expense. It has already spread its upashadow over many of the most fertile counties of England. Its original geographical limits are not precisely known; but these have yearly become more extended since our acquaintance with it, in which respect it appears to agree remarkably well with the country which first gave it birth.

The dodder, like the mistletoe, is a true parasite, having no root of its own, but extracting nourishment from the tissues of other plants. It consists of a mass of pale-reddish branched threads, which shoot out in all directions over the plant attacked; these threads, which represent the stem and branches of the parasite, have no green leaves for the elaboration of food, which are indeed not required, seeing that its nourishment is derived in a prepared state from its victim; a few minute brownish scales, however, form the morphological indication of leaves. At intervals on the stem, little roundish heads of flowers are produced, which are succeeded by little membranous capsules; these opening transversely, 'like a soap-box,' permit the seeds to drop.

When the seed falls upon the soil, the embryo, coiled up like a wire-worm in its interior, comes forth serpent-like from its shell, and lies prostrate on the surface without any attachment. Like the serpent, it no sooner quits the egg than it is in search of prey, and accordingly writhes about, feeding on air, until it finds a suitable stem with which it may close in deadly embrace. It is no sooner twisted around the stem of its devoted victim, than cellular papillæ are sent out on those parts of the threads in contact with the bark; these penetrate the bark, thus forming a medium of communication between the tissues of the two plants, and the appropriation of sap begins. 'Its shoots dart from one plant to another,' says De Candolle, 'and thus are conveyed to new victims when the old ones are exhausted. Often the seeds germinate before they quit the capsules, and the new plant immediately becomes a parasite.'

The ravages of the clover-dodder have been particularly observed in the counties of Hants, Somerset, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Berwick, Mid-Lothian, and in Wales. It is spoken of as 'a great nuisance in Holland and Flanders.' The flax-dodder is not so extensive in its ravages, because flax is not much cultivated in Britain; but in Germany it is a great pest. According to Mr Lance, the seed imported from Russia—previous to the suspension of commercial intercourse—and used in Somersetshire and Wales, was 'full of dodder;' while, on the contrary, the seed used in the south and west of Ireland, imported from America, is free from the parasite. It is stated, on the authority of Mr Thomson, a merchant of Westport, Mayo, that 'on particular inquiry, he was satisfied that the dodder-seed is never found in American, nor yet in Riga flax-seed, and equally satisfied that it is in seed from Odessa and other parts of the south of Europe.'

From the remarks of De Candolle, the dodders would appear to be well known to French cultivators, who call them *teigne*, *rache*, *perrique*, &c. 'It is difficult to guard against them, on account of the rapidity of their vegetation, the facility with which they pass from one plant to another, the abundance of their seeds, and the double power they possess of germinating either in the earth or in the capsule. M. Vaucher cleared his artificial fields from dodder pretty well by perpetually breaking and dividing their stalks with a rake. The means which appear to me really efficacious are, immediately to mow all the

portions of artificial meadow where dodder has been seen to develop itself, and to do so before it can have produced seeds. If it appears in fields of flax, the plants attacked must be cut down or rooted up; and if it appears among vines, the branches must be cut before the seed is matured. If these precautions have been neglected, and a portion of the land should be infested with the seeds, the crop which has been attacked must be replaced by crops of corn or of grasses, such not being liable to the attacks of the parasite. Thus time is given to the seeds of dodder which have been concealed in the soil to exhaust themselves, when they may perish without doing any harm, since the soil finds itself covered with plants which cannot nourish them.

Formidable as our British dodders are when present in great numbers, they are individually very puny when compared with some of the tropical species. One of these is so gigantic, that one of its masses is sufficient to cover a willow-tree from twenty to thirty feet in height; it is, moreover, suicidal by nature—a very curious physiological fact—for when it has eaten up all vegetation around it, and its resources are thus exhausted, it preys upon itself—falls upon the sword of its own ambition.

The facts we have detailed in connection with the dodders suggest one or two thoughts on a subject which has been treated philosophically by some fanciful botanists under the untoward title of the *Wars of Plants*. But the idea is, in reality, not so fanciful as may at first sight appear; for plants have their wars as well as their loves; and it only requires another Darwin to carry home this point to the convictions of every one. We know that many plants are well armed with a defensive armour, which forms a complete protection against the aggressions of herbivorous animals; for although donkeys eat thistles, and cows the more venomous nettles of the waysides, there are some plants so formidable that neither man nor beast can seriously affect them. The *Opuntia*, or prickly pear—a kind of tropical cactus—is one of these. The Grecian traveller, Clarke, has suggested, that in some latitudes it might serve as an outlook for fortifications, since, as he says, 'artillery has no effect upon it; pioneers cannot approach it; fire will not act upon it; and neither infantry nor cavalry can traverse it.' That the *Opuntia* is suitable to the climate of the Southern Crimea may reasonably be doubted; but it might be worthy the consideration of Her Majesty's ministers, whether the soldiers who have already displayed so much valour, might not exhibit the better part thereof by hedging in under an *Opuntia* fence. This plant has, in fact, been often employed as a means of military defence. Sir Hans Sloane relates,* that in the island of St Christopher, when it was to be divided between English and French, it was ordered, by the consent of the two nations, 'that there should be planted three rows of the *Opuntia tuna* as a boundary, thinking these the strongest fortification to hinder the attempts of one another in cases of war.' In the Spanish colonies in America, this plant is considered a very important means of military defence, and is propagated constantly around fortifications with that intent. Desfontaines remarks of it: 'Munimentum hortorum et domorum impenetrabile.'†

But the actual wars of plants are exhibited in some of the phenomena of geographical distribution. Whatever may have been the manner in which the earth was originally clothed with vegetable productions—whether they all radiated from a central Eden, according to the opinion of Linnæus; or, as is more probably the case, each species originated in and was diffused from a centre of its own—all botanists agree, that time has worked changes in the limits of species;

that certain species of weak constitution have been unable to hold their place, while others of a more robust and prolific character have extended their dominion over the earth. We see this warlike process going on around us. Were they left to their own resources, the tender plants we cultivate would soon yield to the supremacy of rank weeds which rise up and assert their right to the soil; and the same phenomenon is constantly going on among the wild plants of mountain and valley. There are, indeed, conquerors from afar, who, Alexander-like, overrun the whole world; thus the yellow mimulus and the canal-weed, natives of the American continent, have, in the brief space of a few years, spread themselves over Europe, displacing the aboriginal vegetable inhabitants of the streams and ditches; thus also the chickweed and the thistle follow in man's footsteps in every region of the globe, waging, like himself, a successful war against their indigenous inhabitants.

When a coral island rises up in the midst of the ocean, it soon becomes covered with a vegetation derived from such seeds as float to its shores. Many of these may be unsuitable to its soil and climate, and merely linger on a miserable existence; but in time the same agencies which brought these original colonists, bring others which find the soil and climate more suitable for their development; the latter soon displace the former, and thus bring about a complete change in the insular flora. In this manner has the vegetation of the British Islands been derived chiefly from the adjoining continent; the alpine plateau of Scandinavia furnishing our Scottish mountains with their boreal flora, while Germany has contributed most of our lowland plants. The orchids of Kent bear evidence of their French origin; while the characteristic plants of the south-west of Ireland appear to have migrated from the north of Spain. Species gain the ascendancy in proportion to their tenacity of life and power of reproduction; but both of these are inferior, and subject to a more powerful law, which restrains the development of species within certain geographical limits. The antagonism of organisms to which we have referred, is thus of great importance in determining many of the phenomena of nature. The contemplative reader will observe, that some of the principles which obtain in the wars of plants are equally applicable to the wars of men.

THE FAST-NIGHT'S TRIBUTE.

THE Jews of Wilna were at one period of their history reckoned the wealthiest and most devout of the many Israelites who bought and sold in Poland. The quarter which they inhabited was richer and dirtier than all the rest of the town. People said that the plague always began there, but trade went briskly on. There was a strict observation of feasts and fasts, new moons and Sabbaths, and for attendance at the synagogue, the Jews of Wilna were unrivalled among their brethren. The requisitions of the Talmud, they fulfilled to the letter: in the traditions of the Rabbins they were known to be orthodox; indeed, like many of the Polish Jews, they augmented the latter by ingenious additions of their own, one of the most popular of which was, that on the night of that famous fast, the day of atonement, Satan had leave to carry off one Jew by way of quit-rent; and the story went that rich men stood in the greatest danger of his preference. This article of faith, which might seem the reverse of comfortable to unpractised minds, was maintained with unshaken confidence and much terror through sundry generations; but in latter days, there arose a controversy on the point between Rabbi Joseph Ben Moses and Rabbi Levi Ben Solomon. The former of these learned doctors, who had travelled in Germany, and conversed with Gentile

* History of Jamaica.

† Flora Atlantica.

scholars, first cast doubts on the received dogma, and at length did not scruple to call it an invention of the heathen; while the latter, being of high conservative principles, declared for the tradition in its literal integrity, which he said the Jews of Wilna should hold fast as the surest pillar of their orthodoxy. The controversy grew high, and the disputants waxed warm. Rabbi Ben Solomon called his antagonist an enemy to ancient faith and morals; Rabbi Ben Moses entitled him a superstitious bigot. Both delivered strong exhortations on the subject, and their parties in the synagogue were so equal that neither could be turned out; but it was generally admitted that most of the old-established merchants held fast by Rabbi Ben Solomon and Satan's quit-rent; while the younger, and less substantial traders, stood with Rabbi Ben Moses for the safety of all Israelites on every night in the year. The last-mentioned party boasted that if the wealth was against, the intelligence was with them; but of one convert they were not a little proud. Simon Ben Tobit had no learning whatever but the knowledge of fur and leather, of which he was one of the keenest and most extensive merchants in Wilna. His wealth was great, and his influence still greater; for Simon had no heirs, having lived a widower from the early death of his spouse Judith; some said because he had never met with a dowry as satisfactory as that of the deceased lady, and had taken a solemn vow to marry on nothing else. However that might be, the fur and leather merchant was a zealous supporter of Rabbi Joseph's doctrine. He said 'rich and respectable men ought to believe it for many reasons; and though somewhat new, it was a great discovery.'

There were those on Rabbi Ben Solomon's side of the question, who hinted that for him it was a great discovery indeed, and were fond of referring to a fact well known in Wilna—namely, that neither Jew nor Gentile in all the city was less inclined to stir abroad on the dreaded night, particularly since a certain dealer in hare and beaver skins threatened him with the traditional abduction, on account of a bale, for which, the dealer asserted, he had not been honestly paid. The matter had gone to law, and been decided in Simon's favour, which he considered complete justification; but though it was twenty years ago, and the merchant had grown rich and the dealer poor, the latter continued to live in the outskirts of the town, and vow vengeance against the Jew every Easter. His name was John Linski, and at the time of our story, his trade was small. Moreover, he had learned, perhaps through meditations on his lost lawsuit, to entertain himself with the spirit of rye; and he and his old wife must have fared meagrely, but for the exertions of an only son, Peter, one of the wildest youths in Wilna for street-broils, holiday frolics, and all manner of mischief. Peter, nevertheless, worked hard for his parents, not at any particular trade, for he would not learn one, but at every variety of accidental business. Nature had gifted him with extraordinary strength and equal courage. Wherever there was a heavy burden to be borne, a stock of hard wood to be cleaved, or an assistant against the wolves and robbers of the Wilna roads wanted by a travelling gentleman, young Linski was in requisition; and, though wild and thoughtless, he had never been known to fail in time of need. Not only had Peter taken part in the paternal vow, but found special fun in molesting Simon Ben Tobit. The wealth and numbers of the Wilna Jews, and the toleration and good neighbourhood which generally prevailed among the varied religions of that northern town, made the authorities willing to discountenance, and even to punish, all attempts of the kind; but there was no prevention of Peter Linski. He came out upon the Jew with volleys of ill names and pork-soup from the narrow and dirty lanes which Simon must pass on his way to the market-place. He

assaulted him with unexecutable threats through the window of his own warehouse, and had more than once pinned a piece of hog's-skin to his robe at the very door of the synagogue. Of course, Simon gave Peter no work, and dissuaded everybody from employing him. It was even reported that he had wished the young sinner the fate of Korah; and Peter, as a last act of annoyance, hoped, in no whisper, that Rabbi Ben Solomon's doctrine might be proved sound, by his disappearance on the next atonement-night.

The day of this widely published hope was rapidly approaching, with the autumnal equinox and the close of the Jewish year. Its coming was regarded not only by Peter Linski, but by all the Jews in Wilna, with profound expectation; for the followers of Rabbi Ben Solomon sympathised so far with the Amalekite, as Simon had begun to call Peter, that they rather anticipated the loss of the fur and leather merchant; and the disciples of Rabbi Ben Moses had declared their high resolves to confront the superstition by going abroad after dark. Simon Ben Tobit was the loudest among these resolutionists. Perhaps he felt it due to the peculiarities of his own position; but the fast of ancient fear came on, with all its attendant forms and ceremonies, partly derived from Old Testament times, and partly from rabbinical interpretations. One statute of the latter origin enjoined remaining, if possible, within the synagogue the entire twenty-four hours. It is, we believe, still observed by pious Jews throughout the world, and was by the pious of Wilna; but rich and busy men occasionally took time for the settlement of accounts, or the conclusions of advantageous bargains with uncertain Gentiles; and many tales had Rabbi Ben Solomon to quote in consequence. Simon had a small transaction pending with a certain dweller in that good town. Michael Gutzloff was a Russian and a travelling-merchant, who went every winter as far as the Siberian fairs with a sledge full of saints' pictures, bad knives, and worse tobacco, which he generally sold; and brought, on his return to Wilna, any article likely to bring a profit. In his last journey, Michael had contrived to secure some half-dozen of black fox-skins—a fur deemed so valuable, that the Russian czars have always considered it their own special perquisite; but the risk was supposed to be balanced by the gain. The skins were to be seen, under suitable precautions, in Michael's back-cellar. Simon had been there seven times, and the difference between offer and demand had sensibly diminished; but there were still fifteen roubles which he could not bring himself to give, and for which Michael stood out with the determination of a man who knew the game was in his hands.

Such was the state of things when shops and warehouses were closed, tools laid by, and industry suspended in the Jewish quarter of Wilna; for sunset warned its inhabitants that the solemn fast had begun. It is said that the synagogue was never more fully attended, and the disciples of Rabbi Joseph were in special haste to get safe into their places before the night fell. Simon Ben Tobit had seen his furs and leathers carefully put up; his own trusty hands made fast the three padlocks which secured his warehouse; he had set his house in order, and was about to assume the suit of sackcloth which rich and regular Israelites were accustomed to keep for this and other doleful occasions, when a messenger from Michael Gutzloff knocked at his door. Being in want of money for his winter expedition, the Russian had made up his mind to dispense with ten of the disputed roubles, and invited Simon to come and divide the remaining five. The season was anything but convenient. Michael lived at the other end of the town, and people were expected to visit his cellar without company; but the fox-skins were a bargain, and the Russian might find another bidder; so, taking out his money-bag with a

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groan that he could not join the solemn assembly; Simon followed the messenger. The division of the five roubles was not to be done quickly; but Simon saved three, exclusive of the rye-brandy, with which Michael had to be put in good-humour, and returned long after dark—repeating the Ten Commandments, to ward off the perils of the night—with the precious furs bundled tight under his arm. Wilna was in those days, as it is still—all but the great churches—indebted for its light only to the sun, moon, and stars. Simon's homeward way was almost pitch-dark, and there poured upon him that steady and continuous rain which the Poles say always comes with the Jewish fast. Terror, nevertheless, did not take hold of the fur and leather merchant till he reached what was known in that good city as the Black Stream—a sort of canal, or rather open sewer, constructed in ancient times, it was said, by a worthy bishop, to carry off the melting snows of winter and the refuse of all the year down to the river, from which both town and province take their names, and divide the Jewish quarter from the lowest Christian suburb. The latter purpose it might have served effectually; but the Jews and Christians bought and sold, and over the Black Stream there was thrown a wooden bridge, narrow, and furnished with a rude rail only on one side. The bridge had been old in the days of Simon's grandfather. The planks were decayed, the rail had given way in sundry places, but nobody thought of repairing it, any more than of clearing out the stream below, whose existence was now made known to all travellers within a mile of the city. At the Jewish end, there stood a rag-store, now shut up and silent; at the Christian one, a small and very dirty lamp burned before the wooden image of a Polish saint, believed to do great service against the plague. As Simon approached in this direction, there was a large dark object moving behind the saint, and all that had been prophesied and promised rushed on his memory. He tried to run over the bridge, but something caught him behind, and with a swing he was flung on the back of a horned hairy thing, which roared in a voice of thunder: 'Come, come to the bottomless pit!' That roar told Simon the true state of his fortunes. It was not into the hands of the Evil One, but those of his enemy, Peter Linski, that he had fallen. In spite of the ox-hide, put on for the occasion, Simon knew him well; and, relieved from his spiritual terrors, the fur and leather merchant kicked, struggled, and shouted for help, with all his might. It was a rule in Wilna that nobody ventured out for any cry but fire; and Simon's efforts would have availed him little if he had not grasped the rail of the bridge, just as his bearer stumbled on the broken planks, and, kicked by Simon and encumbered by his disguise, Linski tried in vain to recover his footing, and plank and rail giving way under his weight, he fell splashing down into the Black Stream, while the triumphant Jew maintained his hold, and stood safe and at liberty. The flickering lamp shewed Simon his enemy sinking slowly in that thick and noisome flood, and vainly stretching out for help. He might go on his way to the synagogue—nobody could tell—and Peter Linski would never annoy him more. Simon thought so for a minute; but the next, conscience spoke. 'Hold my hand fast, Peter Linski,' he said, clutching the rail, and stretching his right arm towards the young man; 'hold fast, and I will help you, if the God of Israel will give me strength!' Peter first caught his fingers, and then his wrist. Never did the Jew get such a pull; and lucky it was that some of the timbers of that old bridge were strong, in spite of time and weather; for by their help, as well as that of Simon, the wild, active youth scrambled up, drenched, dripping, and without his ox-hide. 'Go home, Peter Linski,' said Simon, with some dignity, 'and tell your father that I will pay him the difference in that bale

of hare-skins. Take my advice, also, and come no more to frighten honest people.'

The congregation thought Simon Ben Tobit singularly late in coming to the synagogue; but when the solemnities were over, there was a feast at his house, after the fashion of wealthy Jews, at which he displayed the black fox-skins, and told Rabbi Joseph how, by a special Providence, they had been secured under his girdle before the adventure with Linski on the broken bridge. 'Wise and worthy Simon,' said the rabbi, after hearing the whole story, including what profits might be expected on the skins, 'it was indeed the Enemy who strove to carry off your soul on the night of our solemn fast, when it seemed so easy to let that troublesome Gentile get his own deserts; but he did not prevail—praise to the God of Jacob. And now I see the meaning of that ancient tale over which we have disputed, for it is in times of devout observance that the Adversary chiefly lies in wait for men, and it may be, for Israelites.' The explanation of Rabbi Ben Moses never became popular; but as the story went abroad with sundry additions, believers in the ancient dogma rather increased, and Simon's narrow escape from the tribute-taker has been handed down in confirmation of its truth among the Jews in Wilna. It is said, however, that the enmity between the merchant and the Linskis ceased from that day. Peter got work about Simon's store, and of course dealt no longer in pork-soup and ill names. The old man's Easter vow was never repeated; and the controversy being closed the same year by the death of Rabbi Joseph, the fur and leather merchant talked no more on that subject; and the Jews' quarter still rejoices in the old and orthodox belief of the Fast-night's Tribute.

RUSTIC PROVERBS AND PROVERBIAL SAYINGS OF ULSTER.

It might be asked—Why should not our provincial antiquaries amuse themselves, as their brethren in Germany have done, by forming, for their respective localities, collections of the local proverbs of each; or, at least, by illustrating the several modifications which the common proverbs of the language undergo in the various districts, from the peculiarities of dialect, of customs, of names, and even of local, personal, or historical allusions?

No one would suppose that, even to the present day, there does not exist any popular collection of Irish proverbs, whether of native growth or of English and Scotch importation.* Yet the native Irish proverbs alone would themselves afford materials for a large volume. The conversation of the Irish-speaking population, in some districts, is almost entirely made up of proverbial sentences; and it is always profusely illustrated with proverbial similes. We knew a school-master, in a very remote locality, whose conversation might be matched, in this particular, against the happiest efforts of Sancho Panza; and we once saw a letter of his composition which would not be out of place beside the wittiest of the French 'Sermons en Proverbes,' recently described by M. Nisard in his curious *History of Popular Books*. We meet with Irish proverbs of every form, in poetry and in prose, diffuse and sententious, humorous and grave, sportive and earnest. Sometimes they are abstract, philosophical, and of general application; sometimes they are founded on local, personal, or historical allusions; sometimes they present a curious combination of all these characters. Their general tone and colour may perhaps best be described by comparing them, both in themselves and

* The only attempt towards the formation of such a collection with which we are acquainted, is in a note of Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*, ii. p. 397.

in their conversational use, with the Eastern proverbs, which form so large a part of the colloquial intercourse of the Syrians and Egyptians, and which lend such a charm to those inimitable pictures of Oriental life which travellers like Lane or Burckhardt—who can be truly said to have found a home in the East—have given us in their writings.

The metrical proverbs of Ireland, especially, are exceedingly interesting; and the fidelity with which—although of course unwritten, and often of considerable length—their precise words are preserved in districts between which not the slightest intercourse is maintained, is not the least curious circumstance of their history. For many a long age they have maintained their hold upon the people:

Peasants in the field,
Sailors on the roaring ocean,
Students, tradesmen, pale mechanics—
All have sung them.

As witnesses of many a usage now forgotten; as an illustration of the social condition of the country; above all, as displaying in its homeliest and most unstudied mood the intellectual character of the Irish race, it is difficult to overstate their importance; and we know no object more worthy the attention of the Irish antiquarian societies, whether local or general, than the collection and preservation of these embodiments of national wisdom.

A slight but interesting contribution to this important undertaking appears in a late number of the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, a highly meritorious antiquarian journal, published quarterly at Belfast, in a style, both as regards its matter and its typographical and pictorial execution, not unworthy of any of our metropolitan presses.* The *Ulster* proverbs, to which the correspondent of the *Ulster Journal* confines himself, are, of course, among all the local proverbs of Ireland, the least characteristic, in a national point of view, because they are chiefly importations of the English and Scotch settlers, who constitute a large section of the population of that province. But we can hardly bring ourselves to doubt, that even this instalment of the work will be eagerly welcomed, and that it will be followed up by a thorough investigation of the subject of Irish proverbs, properly so called, whether those of the Irish-speaking districts of Ulster, in Donegal, Antrim, Monaghan, and Tyrone, or of the more completely Celtic counties of the southern and western provinces. In the hope of attracting attention to this curious subject, we are induced to offer a few remarks on that portion of it which has already been partially opened in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*.

The rural population of Ulster is known to contain a larger amount of foreign admixture than that of any other part of Ireland outside of the ancient pale. From the time of the English invasion, indeed, there have been settled in a portion of the county of Down a number of English or Anglo-Norman families, who are still known as a distinct class; but the great body of the Ulster settlers date their possession from the well-known plantation of Ulster under James I. and the two subsequent confiscations; the first after the rising of 1641, and the second after the Jacobite struggle of 1690-1. In all these settlements, the larger and far more active element has been the Scotch; but it is very unequally distributed over the province—Armagh, Down, Antrim, Derry, and Fermanagh have received by far the largest proportion of foreign admixture. Donegal, Tyrone, Cavan, and Monaghan are still comparatively Celtic. Even in the settled counties themselves, the distribution of races is by no means uniform. In Down, the northern and north-

eastern baronies are almost as purely Scotch in language, in religion, and in habits, as Ayrshire or the Lothians; while in the more southern districts the Celtic element is almost equally predominant; and in Antrim, where the Scotch and English settlers possess a large numerical majority, there is, nevertheless, an extensive district, locally known as the 'Glens,' stretching along the eastern and north-eastern coast, in which the population is exclusively native and Catholic, and in which, until within the last thirty years, the Irish language continued to be commonly, if not almost universally spoken. The same may be said of some districts of Derry, and, still more, of the yet more Celtic regions of Donegal, Tyrone, and Monaghan. In relation to the present subject, we have not to deal with either of these antagonistic extremes, but with the neutral or mixed race which lies between them, and which combines, as well in language as in manners, some of the leading peculiarities of both.

The language of a great part of the rustic population of Ulster is a curious medley of Scotch and English—the latter language, however, everywhere forming the basis of the mixture. In general, it may be said that the proportion of Scotch decreases as you proceed southwards, and as you recede westwards from the coast; but there are Scotch words and phrases which may be met in all parts of Ulster, even to the most southern point of the county of Monaghan, or the most western border of Cavan or Donegal. It might be curious, if space permitted, to enter somewhat into the characteristics of the local dialect which results from this admixture; but we must be content with saying, that even where the words are English, the inflections, the pronunciation, and the construction, commonly tend towards the Scotch forms. Many, however, of what may appear to be the peculiarities of the people of many parts of this province, are, in truth, common to all primitive and secluded populations—as, for example, the habit of distinguishing individuals by appellatives derived from their occupation, or from some personal peculiarity, rather than by their family names. Thus we commonly meet, or, at least, commonly did meet, some fifteen or twenty years ago, individuals known by no other name than 'Bletherin Dick,' 'Skellyin Pether,' 'Tommy the Tape,' 'Biddy the Bacon,' or 'Paddy the Bottle;' and we knew a district in which four men of the common name Edward were respectively known—and known to the youngest child in the parish—as 'Red Ned,' 'Black Ned,' 'Neddy the Guldhercock' (Turkey cock), and 'Neddy Palaver!'

A very large proportion of the proverbs and proverbial sayings of Ulster, are a mere transcript of the corresponding Scotch or English sentiment; but most of them undergo some change in the process of transference. The conversation of the peasantry abounds in proverbial similes and illustrations; and the repartees with which their wordy wars are garnished, are always felt to be happiest and most telling when they are couched in phraseology which bears the stamp of proverbial wisdom or proverbial humour. A sly, knowing fellow, for instance, is said to 'know the buttered side of his bannock;' a man who deals largely in professions, but whose sincerity is suspected, is often reminded that 'talk's chape;' a rough but honest friend is said to 'be better nor he's likely, like a swung cat;' while of one who, in doing a service, makes so much noise about it as practically to deprive it of all value in the eyes of the recipient, it is said that 'the egg was not worth all the keeklin.'

Indeed, many metaphorical expressions, founded upon these proverbial analogies, almost form an established element of the rustic vocabulary. A weak or fickle friend is described as 'every man's dog;' a fidgety person is compared to 'a hen on a hot griddle;' and a good trouncing with a shillilagh is disguised as a 'rubbing-down with the oil of hazel.' If a sudden and

* The *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*. Belfast: Archer and Sons.

embarrassing crisis arise, it is said that 'the fat's in the fire.' If a quarrel is foreseen as a probable contingency, it is predicted that 'there'll be wigs on the green.' Most of these are common in Scotland, but sometimes the allusions are grotesquely Irish. We have heard it said of a greedy eater, that he 'took a bite out of the bannock like the heel of a boot-jack.' A barefaced liar is said to 'tell lies as fast as a dog would trot.' If the affirmation be confirmed by an oath, he will be told that 'he'd swear through a dale-board;' and in domestic quarrels, it is not uncommon for one of the combatants to threaten his antagonist that he will 'comb his head with the crepey.'

The proverbs which bear upon domestic concerns display all the characteristic shrewdness for which the people of the North are believed to be remarkable. 'The master's eye puts mate on the horse's ribs,' the Ulster form of the well-known proverb, is nowhere more literally understood or more scrupulously acted upon, and there is an endless variety of similar maxims. What a mine of valuable philosophy in the simple counsel, 'Niver lowae (loose, unyoke) the plough to kill a mouse,' or 'Niver loss (lose) the sheep for the ha'porth of tar.' What a world of bickering and ill-will might be spared if men would only keep before their eyes the good-humoured maxim, 'Inches disn't break squares in a load of whins' (gorse, furze). There is much good feeling, too, as well as good sense, in the reflection conveyed by another of those popular sayings, 'It's niver lost that a friend gets;' and a world of wretchedness and self-torture would be spared if men would but recollect the advice, 'Niver gowl (howl) till you're hit,' and the equally practical maxim, 'A pound of care niver paid an ounce of debt.'

Some of the proverbs collected in the Ulster Journal are unmistakably local. There is a saying of very general use in England, 'A dog's life, hunger and ease;' the Ulster proverb is, 'We have dogs' days, hunger and aise, through the *blue month*—'the blue month' being the interval between the failure of the old crop of potatoes and the coming on of the new one, commonly the month of July. In like manner, the proverbs—'A whang off a cut loaf's niver missed;' 'Niver powr wather on a drowned rat;' 'A soople mother makes a lazy chile'—though but differing very slightly in form from the same proverbs in their foreign garb, will yet be recognised at once, as of Ulster use, by any person conversant with the local phraseology. There is a very expressive saying, 'Butther to butther's no kitchen,' which would hardly be understood at all elsewhere. The word 'kitchen' means 'condiment' or 'seasoning,' and is used to designate whatever is used (as, for instance, in the homely dietary of the peasantry, bacon, butter, milk, &c.) as a relish for the potatoes, bread, or other ruder and more insipid fare which forms the body of the meal. This homely phrase is transferred to the vocabulary of everyday life; and the proverb is applied when two men or two women, as the case may be, dance together, or in any similar contingency. By a like application of what appears to be a purely local name, a person who is making a rapid fortune is said to be 'making money as if he had a *cam* on the fire;' the '*cam*' being the cresset or melting-pot used for the purpose of melting lead, pitch, or other fusible material, and the whole being a local paraphrase for 'coining.'

The Ulster proverbs do not spare the fair sex. 'Do like the women—say no, and take it,' is a bad compliment to female sincerity. The well-known verse about 'a spaniel, a woman, and a walnut-tree,' although it is clearly an English importation, is also familiar enough in Ulster, to provoke a suspicion that the feeling has been transplanted as well as the rhyme; and the maxim that 'Nixt after single, a good wife's best,' is a very equivocal recognition of the charms of matrimony. It is

curious, too, that the prejudice against mothers-in-law, and the conviction of the hopelessness of maintaining peace in a household where the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law live in common, have left their traces here, as in the proverbial lore of most other countries. The English maxim, 'Happy is the wife who is married to a motherless son,' falls infinitely short in expressiveness of the Ulster rhyme—

Of all the ould women that ever I saw,
Sweet bad-luck to my mother-in-law!

A man who anticipates his income, is said 'to eat the calf in the cow's belly.' Of a niggardly hardfisted churl, it is said that 'it is as hard to draw a shilling out of his pocket, as to drag a cat out of a silk-stocking by the tail.' When a particular result may be relied on as certain to be attained in every possible contingency, the party will be assured that 'if he doesn't get it in male, he'll get in malt.' Vague and barely possible conjectures are met by the rejoinder, that 'maybe's a big book;' and threats or promises of very distant events, by hints that 'niver's a long word.' Of a youth who devotes an unusually long time to the toilet, it is said that 'an empy (empty) head is long a-combing.' A flighty person is said to 'have a bee in his bonnet.' One who from hurry, pressure of business, or other cause of perplexity, has got into a state of bewilderment, will declare that 'he doesn't know *whether it's a head or a bee-skep* (bee-hive) he has upon his shoulders;' and we recollect a gentleman who, in driving his gig up a very steep hill in a wild district of Antrim, observed to a passing peasant, 'that it was a bad road for giga,' receiving the ready rejoinder: 'He maun ha'e giga in his head wad bring a gig here.'

'Discretion is the better part of valour,' in Ulster use appears in the still more expressive form, 'Betther be a coward than a corp' (corpse). Perhaps, indeed, this maxim is rather a union of the classic proverb just cited with the Hudibrastic adage—

He that fights and runs away,
Will live to fight another day.

There is an endless variety of adages and phrases to express the various degrees of folly or stupidity. An eccentric person, where the eccentricity is not excessive, is said, oddly enough, to 'want a square of being round.' The next degree of aberration constitutes a 'quarter-clift;' a silly half-witted fellow is called, as in the kindred Scotch phrase, a 'haverel,' or 'half-natural;' a downright fool is styled a 'natural,' or (ironically) a 'head o' wit;' and sometimes (though in the more southern districts) an 'omadawn,' or rude, uncivilised boor, is paraphrased as 'a coorse (coarse) Christian;' and, in the last stage of unredeemed ignorance and vulgarity, you may sometimes hear the strange vituperation: 'You're a mouth, and you'll die a lip!' The proverbial sentences on this head are equally various. Sometimes it is foretold that a man 'will never set the Lagan on fire;' of another it is suggested, that 'there's a power of brains outside of his head;' and a third is broadly assured that 'he hasn't as much brains as 'ud carry a snipe across a bog.' The extreme of ignorance is 'not to know B from a bull's foot.' Sometimes your friend will express his pity for your folly or simplicity by praying, 'The Lord send you more wit, and me more money;' sometimes he will turn it aside by the jocular exclamation: 'Bother, says the pinkeen, I hate noise!' The 'penny-wise and pound-foolish' man of the English adage, is characterised in Ulster as one who would 'save at the spigot, and spill at the bung.' Of one who, with good talents and prospects, has thrown himself away in life, it is oddly but expressively said, that 'he was cut out for a gentleman, but the devil ran away with the patten.'

It need hardly be said that among the Ulster proverbs we meet many a familiar face with hardly

the smallest variation of feature. 'The airy bird catches the worm,' is the favourite argument for early rising; although we have heard it replied, that whatever it may prove for the bird, the case of the worm, as stated by the adage, is an unhappy illustration of the maxim; for if the worm had not risen so early, he might have escaped his fate. Nor will the reader fail, through their slight local variation, to recognise as old acquaintances the following miscellaneous adages:— 'Them 'at hides can fine.' 'Purty people and ragget people is always gettin' plucks.' 'Them 'at gets the name of airy risin' may lie all day.' 'Let ivery herrin' hing by its own tail.' 'As well hang for an owl sheep as a young lamb.' 'As we burned the canlie, we'll burn the inch.' 'It's a long loanin (lane) that has no turn.' 'Handsome is that handsome die.' 'Niver wait to look for the ladle till the broth's in the fire.' 'Hit a dog with a bone and he'll not growl.' 'Ivery day braw makes Sunday a daw.' 'The cobbler's wife and the smith's mare afen goes barefooted.'

There is a very curious phrase, which, though it can hardly be said to be so popular as to deserve the name of an adage, may yet occasionally be heard. Gerald Griffin, in one of his tales, makes an amusing use of the story on which it is founded. An article in which the cost of accessories far exceeds that of the article itself or its nominal material, is said to be 'like the limestone-broth.' An old-school farmer, whose family is just emerging into gentility, will apply this phrase to the ribbons or other trimmings of his daughter's bonnets, or to the furnishings of his wife's new parlour. The limestone-broth was the device employed by a sly old *boccalgh*, or wandering mendicant, to secure a good supper without seeming to ask it. Making his way into a plain but 'likely' cottage, he begged the good-wife to lend him a small pot, and to permit him to cook his supper upon her fire. On her acceding to his request, he produced from his wallet two substantial pieces of freshly-cut limestone, which he laid carefully in the pot, and just covering them with water, placed the pot upon the fire to boil. The good woman could not help asking him what it was that he was going to make, and was informed that it was limestone-broth. When the boiling had proceeded for some time, the beggarman tasted the contents, and pronouncing the broth excellent, begged for a little salt to season it. By and by, he suggested that all it wanted was a spoonful of meal to thicken it. Next came a petition for a slice or two of turnips and leeks, to give it a little substance; and in the end a hint that it wouldn't be the worse of a 'knuckle of bacon,' just to give it 'the laste taste in the world of the flavour of the mate.' The good woman, who watched the proceeding with the utmost interest, cheerfully complied with all those successive requisitions; and when, at last, at the conclusion of the operation, she was invited to try the limestone-broth, she pronounced it 'quite as good as any mate-broth she ever tasted in all her life!' The application of the story will be readily understood.

It would be easy to multiply these specimens of the proverbial wisdom of Ulster; for there is an almost inexhaustible variety of them. Some are indicative of that prudent forecast which is believed to be the great characteristic of the 'canny north.' There are a great many sayings about 'puttin' by for the sore fut,' and 'layin' in for the rainy day,' which, of course, will be recognised as direct importations. We are not so certain of another form of the same sentiment which may sometimes be met, to the effect that 'a lazy man is a beggarman's brother.'

It has been observed, indeed, that the very homeliest of these sayings, those which bear the plainest marks of having been

are invariably the most terse and the most felicitous. What words could more happily express the same sentiment, than 'Bettier sup with a cutty than want a spoon;' or, 'They're scarce of news that talks ill of their mother!'

It must be confessed, on the other hand, that the Ulster proverbs are, for the most part, sadly deficient in the poetic character; and in this respect they present a striking contrast with the native proverbial lore still in limited circulation, although rapidly disappearing, among the Irish-speaking race. It would be interesting to pursue this contrast, if space permitted; and, indeed, the whole subject is well deserving of the attention of the learned in Irish popular literature and antiquities. The day is fast approaching when it will be difficult to preserve or recover these, or indeed any other of the characteristics of the social life of the native Irish of the past generation. The manners and occupations of the peasantry are rapidly undergoing a change. The complete annihilation of the linen-trade, once the staple manufacture of Ulster, has in itself effected a complete revolution in the habits of the people, and especially in the constant domestic intercourse which a sedentary occupation such as this necessarily produces. Many an Ulster homestead of 'sixty years since' could furnish a counterpart for Longfellow's exquisite picture in *Evangeline*, where

Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps, and in kirtles
Scarlet, and blue, and green, with distaffs spinning the golden
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles, within doors,
Mingled their sound with the whir of the wheels and the songs of the maidens.

Now the busy factory, with the ceaseless din of its machinery, and the hard rules of its matter-of-fact system, has taken the place of the cheerful family work-room, with its merry gossip and homely collisions of jest and repartee; and the change which the consequent modification of habits and manners has brought with it, is almost as great as though now, in the very same regions,

Dwelt another race, with other customs and language.

In a few years more, the lore, over which it is still so pleasant to linger, will live only in the echoes of the past.

VILLAGE-LIFE IN FRANCE.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

Do you remember Les Ormeaux, and our *bonne*, Argentine? * We have little more to say about our country-quarters, so far as the house is concerned; but we have now become acquainted with the neighbouring village and its manners, and have made quite a friendship with Argentine. Occasional *brises* with the officials of the place, even sometimes with our *propriétaires* themselves, vary our existence. These, it must be confessed, are generally procured for us by Argentine, one of those excellent but dangerous dependents, who, serving us with great zeal themselves, take care that no one else shall do so; but on one occasion Madame la *Propriétaire* was solely in fault. The affair was caused by her sending some people, without any warning, to take away the piano from our drawing-room—a commission which the good-natured gardener and workmen executed very unwillingly. The postman was so interested, that he stopped

* Lest the reader's memory should be more defective than the author supposes, we may say that in No. 86 he will find the history of a day in a French country-house, with a vivacious sketch of manners, and a characteristic outline—filled up in the present paper—of a French *bonne* of the best kind.—Ed.

Framed for village churls,
Not for high dames and mighty earls,

twice as he passed the window to look in, and repeat: 'Quelle méchanceté!' I remonstrated a little—not very wisely, as she was perfectly *dans son droit*; but, behold, the tigress started up in a moment; the French claws were out like lightning; the eyes flashed fire, and the voice was raised to a perfect peacock's scream of angry self-justification. Seeing her in this state, I said little or nothing, and turned quietly away, she bawling after me: 'Personne ne m'apprendra les usages!' All this was uttered on the stairs, and audible through the whole house; so unmanaged was the lady's enthusiasm. Soon after, we heard her fuming away about it to her husband, her wrath being now turned on Argentine, who had expressed her opinion most decidedly of all, and who now heard her say: 'Attends un peu, pendant que j'arrange Argentine dans la cuisine.' The latter, like a true French gamecock, was not a bit dismayed by the prospect, but prepared herself, with great glee and spirit, for an equal combat. Taking my sister aside, she rehearsed to her what she meant to say, with the most animated gestures, and a perfect theatrical effect, waving her arms, and throwing worlds of emphasis into her voice. The whole was in a style of polite and cutting irony, and wound up with a sharp hit at the doubtful style of some of the lady's guests, in the words: 'Une maison si peu respectable.' However, the grand fight did not come off; for madame had thought better of it, and in a few hours came to our window, the smiling, courteous little Frenchwoman once more, to explain and apologise for what she called her *vieacité Française*.

Sometimes Argentine has a quarrel with the gardener, whose temper is not belied by his two wild fierce eyes; and then these two French spitfires shoot out their abuse like a discharge of artillery, their words racing after each other as fast as they can go. Argentine, like a true Parisian—though she is Picard-born—has a great contempt for country manners and intelligence, especially for the specimens here; she complains of their way of talking, which is certainly rugged and unintelligible, and says: 'On a ici la gorge très-forte.' Apropos of a very neat green checked dress of hers that we were admiring, she told us that when she went to a village near, the people passing by laughed at her, and told her it was a gown to go to the Carnival in. This, we supposed, was rather a compliment; but she assured us that it was in allusion to the rags and tatters that at that time are carried about for sale, and that any such allusion was always meant for insolence. She said she had made no answer, for they would not have understood her, 'tant ces gens du pays sont bêtes.' She could have said: 'C'est trop bonne, monsieur, pour aller au Carnaval avec vous—but of what use would that be? They would only have rejoined with some new insolence.'

One beautiful summer morning I rambled out early, as was my custom, to make the most of the few precious hours of the whole day. These delicious summer mornings, when the known, familiar landscape is changed into a fresh-created paradise, bathed in its first dew, with its ethereal elements not yet quite resolved from a rich confusion of mist, lights, shadows, and pearly liquidness, into clear and separate form! I went down through the orchard and the prairie, out by a link-gate that never shuts, half hid in thick hedges, into the corner of a small green lane leading out into three roads to different villages. I passed along, enjoying on one side the valley, with all its meadows, fresh mown; on the other, the hill, with all its soft slopes of prairies and wood, at the top of which stands our country-house, invisible among the trees, but with the little billiard-house half-way down, and the deserted *manège* at the bottom, shewing their peaked roofs and white stone-walls through the foliage; while to the right, here and there, a ruinous stone-cottage or two in its orchards marks the tiny village of

Les Ormeaux. I took my way onward to a favourite knoll, on whose grassy top all was dewy sunshine and emerald shade, and under whose knot of tall birch-trees I gazed down on the whole valley. It slept below, pillowed on woods, with wreaths of bright vague mist softly hanging over it, the aqueduct at one end shining boldly out; in the middle, rich meadows poplar-bounded, the big village looking only like a few houses grouped into the centre of the valley, and a delicate dream of blue distance between woods and rocks closing up the prospect. In the flood of pale translucent turquoise above, the little snowy spot of moon still hangs, and there is still a soft stir in the air, like the pulse of morning-life. But sounds are beginning to wake up around, like the tinkling of small bells ringing the world back to life and business—the whispering, laughing, screaming, rattling, or bubbling notes of the birds; the creaking of cart-wheels; the whetting of scythes; the voices here and there of the haymakers, or of the women and children watching the cows, secured, as usual, by a string. These animals belong to different owners, and are generally stall-fed, though allowed, for a few hours in the day, to graze in the fields of some richer propriétaire. I talk to their keepers, and hear the praises of their *belles vaches*, and admire the gay groups that run about pursuing the more self-willed animals over the dewy, sunny prairie; while others sit in the shade eating their breakfast. Rosalie, a poor *folle*, kindly treated by all, who fancies she too is guarding cows, is always to be found here, with wild look and grotesque attire. As a proof of her *folie*, she wears a bonnet, actually the only one in the village—a strange sunburnt, shapeless thing it is. Now she stands and calls to me, triumphantly waving a thick leafy sapling-stem like a sceptre. The blue butterflies skim over the harebells, that look like their sisters, all drenched in dew. But the sun grows high and hot, and I return home up the hill, through a hayfield, and by a narrow romantic red stony path, hidden under the great branching arms of a family of noble *marronniers* (Spanish chestnuts). An old woman is leading, through clustering honeysuckle bushes, her white goat, and a beautiful snowy kid, that leaps over the young shrubs and butts at its mother.

As I approached the hamlet, I remembered that I wanted some poppies to complete a bouquet of wild-flowers I was painting; and seeing some in a corn-field just above the road, I entered it, and made two steps into the wheat to collect my spoil. Suddenly a voice called: 'Mademoiselle!' and there started, as it seemed, up from the ground, a white-bearded stooping old peasant, who told me that I must not walk in the corn—that it did a great deal of harm—that the propriétaire would be very angry, &c. I made all sorts of apologies, pointed out that I had done no damage, and went my way. In our own grounds, I found the workmen conversing in some excitement about something or other; and soon learned that the subject of discourse was that the garde-champêtre had caught mademoiselle in the corn, and was about to make a procès verbal about it, and fine her two francs. We consulted M. l'Espérance, and found that it was so; and that, instead of being, as we at first supposed, a mere attempt at extortion, the whole proceeding was perfectly justifiable by law. The garde-champêtre is a sort of public officer—as much so, he said, as a gendarme—paid by the community to guard all their fields; that a single step off the path is a trespass which the garde is bound to report; and that it is at the propriétaire's choice to exact what sum he thinks necessary, or to *faire dresser un procès verbal*—that is, lodge a complaint at the Cour de la Justice, and make a *sommation* of the offender to stand his trial. Though a suit, however, might have been very amusing, as it was not quite worth the trouble and expense, I

consented to pay the *amende*; and in due time the garde-champêtre appeared with a dirty bit of paper, on which M. Bedard, the churlish propriétaire, had made an ill-spelt statement that I owed him fifty sous for trespass.

No doubt the excessive rigour with which property is guarded in France has its justification. The land is unenclosed, and the majority of proprietors are poor, depending wholly on those few acres for their subsistence; so that injury is very easily done, and would be very severely felt. The same penalties await the walking in a hayfield before it is mown: if, after it is mown, the owner means to get *une seconde coupe de foin* off it, he sticks up a bundle of straw and a piece of wood in one corner. If this warning is unseen or disregarded, the inevitable garde-champêtre and the fine, or the procès verbal, follow.

A visit to the village introduced us to the abode of a peasant-proprietor, quite a great man in his way. The house is a picturesque old stone-cottage, solidly built. The entrance and exterior would be considered shabby in England, though the proprietors are rich, and have taken pains to make themselves comfortable; but good building, at least good finishing-off and external neatness, are things scarcely known in French country-life. We entered by a low dark door, through a passage darker still, then through a low large empty room, where cider is made, and emerged into a good-sized garden at the back, with fruits, vegetables, and some nice flowers, and a beautiful view over the valley. Madame told us with pride that it was kept up entirely by her son, who, as he worked with his father on M. l'Esperance's grounds, had only an hour or two in the early morning or the late evening to devote to it. The young man himself presently appeared, and blushed his modest pleasure at our praise of his labours, though only venturing now and then to join with a word or two in our conversation. He is about twenty years old, tall and slight, and has a charming face, with something of the sweetness and modesty of a girl's expression, a feminine gentleness of manner, and withal so good, true, and simple look, that one cannot imagine anything but innocence in the soul within. I have not unfrequently met this type among the peasant-boys here—a delicate, almost Raffaelesque beauty of features, with a sweet, good expression.

The good woman then shewed us all over her premises: her husband bought the place sixteen years ago, and they made it, garden and all, completely themselves. When I asked her if she was fond of it, she said there was to her no such a place in the world. They have, besides, six *arpents de terre*, consisting of a meadow whence they get hay, and which is full of fine old apple-trees, used for cider. This they sell in large quantities, and make a great profit by it: it is the only article of their produce they sell. We were shewn into the drawing-room and the best bedroom, which, to our surprise, were furnished as in the houses of the gentry; especially the latter, which was evidently used as a sitting-room, with its damask moreen curtains and gilt mirror, timepiece and candlesticks. She insisted on our tasting her cider, which was very good.

After this, we went into the yard, inspecting the nice clean *greniers*, fragrant with hay, and full of the great wooden vessels, pails, and barrels, used for cider-making and other purposes. Then we went to the cow-house, and admired a very beautiful creature, cream-coloured, something like an Alderney, but large and vigorous. It was stall-fed, as is the custom here, being turned out only for an hour or two in the day. All these concerns—garden, cider-press, cow, and farmyard—are managed by the son, who winds up his day with the accounts. We parted with many mutual politenesses, and with much pleasure at this glimpse of a character unknown in England—the peasant-

proprietor, completely a peasant, yet wealthy, possessed of all the comforts consistent with his social position, and not aspiring to more. The good-woman herself was dressed like the humblest paysanne: the handkerchief-coiffure, the loose body quite untrimmed, the short bedgown-petticoat, blue stockings, and coarse shoes—all of the plainest cut and texture, and all, though not unbecoming to youth bloom and a light figure, seemingly made to shew off the advances of age.

We returned through the one rude village-street of which Les Ormeaux consists, ending in a little place, with the *mairie* on one side, the church on the other, and a large stone reservoir at the end. It is highly picturesque, as the cottages are mostly crumbling and tumbling at every corner. Though low, they have a good deal of extent in the way of odd ins and outs, wings, gables, penthouses, yards, and outhouses—all in solid but ruinous stone, with sloping thatched roofs above, and crumbling stone-steps outside. They are almost all built from the ruins of the hunting-châteaux which the noblesse in olden days used to occupy here. There are in the neighbourhood, amongst the woods, various farmhouses called *bouillies*, and enclosed by a wall. These, in the time of Louis XIV., were all royal property, and occupied by the *enfants de la cour*, who were sent down there to be brought up *en retraite*, and fed, as was customary, on *bouillie*; hence the name.

And here I may remark that a change is gradually coming over Argentine. In spite of her Paris scorn for the paysans, there is one *blouse* whom I had early noticed as more frequently than the others passing the drawing-room on his way to the kitchen on errands that seem to me somewhat frivolous, who stays longer, and at parting repeats more often and in softer tones the 'Bon jour, mademoiselle;' a blouse whom, in short, as my sister expresses it, she has found too blue for her peace. The symptoms are, that she now wears constantly her best blue dress, and that lace-cap, with its coquette ribbons, for which she paid six francs; and sometimes, like us, she has a tea-rose in her *ceinture*, when, her day's work done, she wanders about the garden with the white kitten in her arms; also, that I meet her on the stairs, too deeply preoccupied to see me, moving without her usual careless buoyant activity; and when I rally her on her *air sérieux*, that she can only repeat hurriedly: 'Non, mademoiselle, je pensais.' I connect all this with the secret excitement, veiled in laughter, with which she told me of 'deux messieurs dans le village' who had engaged her to dance for the fête—soon to take place—a month beforehand. The individual whom I suspect, is the handsome, good-humoured Hippolyte Charron, the peasant-proprietor's son; at anyrate, he is always the person meant when she speaks casually of 'un jeune monsieur,' and who is certainly a legitimate object of attraction. It is proudly told of him that, at the conscription three years ago, he was drawn, and bought off at the unusually high sum of 1300 francs, on account of his superior physical qualifications for the army: this demonstrates, too, his value to his family.

All the world is now preparing for the fête of St Eustache—the patron saint of our little church—which is the most important in the year, except the Fête Dieu, which took place in June. It is expected to draw many strangers here. There will be a *grande masse* in the morning, with a ball in the evening; our propriétaires have invited a number of people for that week; and the dignity of the church-proceedings will be enhanced by the presence of the Archbishop of Chalcedoine—in what *partibus infidelium* situated, my geography-books do not inform me, but I conclude Asia Minor—who is come to stay with M. le Curé.

The said curé called one afternoon, his object being to borrow a crimson cushion for the use in church of monseigneur the archbishop. This prelate is a Smyrniote by birth, and has a negro-servant, whom

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he bought in the slave-market at Smyrna for sixty francs, and whose face is marked with three scars, inflicted by his mother at his birth, which, it seems, is the fashion with the boys of the tribe to which he belonged. The curé is a meek little man, whose relations are among the peasantry of the village, and whose niece makes our dresses. We see his small straight black figure from time to time gliding along our garden-walks, through the trees, and sometimes into the house, with the peculiar stealthy quietness of his class. The gliding black-robed form looks strange to us Protestants; but I perfectly acquit this peaceable little priest of any designs towards our conversion or destruction.

The Sunday before the fête, we had a business-visit from M. le Bedeau (beadle), M. le Maire, and M. le Tailleur, the last being the curé's brother. Their object was to collect subscriptions for a new black coat for the beadle—not before it is wanted, as I can testify. He came humbly in a blouse, and therefore did not present the petition himself.

But my chief anxiety at present is about the toilet of our Argentine for the evening-dance, which is a grand event in her quiet, contented, hard-working life. I must be excused for bringing her in a good deal; she is our chief link of communication with the village-world, and I confess, besides, to a great affection for her. My suspicions with regard to the handsome young mason have quickened my interest on this occasion.

Well, we found, on questioning her, that she had nothing but an old faded pink cotton-gown, and was too economical to buy another. So we have done our best to make her *belle*, by buying a very pretty gay blue print, that looks like muslin, and gives her great satisfaction; and the curé's niece is set to work at once to make it up. Likewise, I gave her a commission to the large town of Versailles, to get herself some small items to complete her toilet; she is so modest, grateful, and easily satisfied, that it is a pleasure to help her.

The great day of the fête began, unfortunately, with pouring rain—greatly, I fear, to the detriment of the chateau arrangements. These, however, have gone on with great bustle and energy all the day; servants, gardeners, workmen, pass our windows every moment, carrying down the materials for a grand dinner to the billiard-house on the second terrace, where, fortunately for us, the revels are to be held. First, our great dining-table is borrowed; then the unjustly seized piano is hauled down, through the soaking rain, and a confusion of French tongues raised to their highest pitch. From time to time, carriages drive in, and discharge ladies in gay dresses, prepared for a holiday in the country. M. and Madame l'Esperance, *en grande tenue*, equal to the occasion, and apparently in high spirits, pass to and fro, and civilly ask us to join their party at tea, which we as civilly decline, having a better fête in view—that of the peasants in the place. Meanwhile, the garden is over-streamed with these new guests; they are generally French—all of a piece: they smoke, bawl, scream, and are very much at home.

The village, too, is getting on with its preparations; this morning was the grande masse, which our poor little church did its best to render imposing. It was performed by the archbishop, in his cope of purple watered-silk, with his face darkened by southern suns, his gleaming good-humoured eyes, his portly figure, and a fine diamond-ring. There was the *bedeau* in his new splendour, to which we had contributed our mite; plenty of flowers, chiefly from M. l'Esperance's garden; fine company; and as many tapers and as much music as they could contrive.

At two o'clock, comes the ceremony of carrying round the *gâteau*, made of *pain bénit* (blessed bread). A separate one is carried to each house, and, as it is

paid for, I suppose it is merely a way of getting a contribution for the church. The Protestant family in the village of whom I have spoken, and who are very kind and liberal in all their proceedings, gave last year twenty francs. The cake was brought to us by the master-mason's son, in full dress, and blushing a great deal. The office of carrying the cake is eagerly sought for by the young men, who contrive to make much amusement out of it. I am afraid they failed with us; as, not quite understanding the matter, we behaved awkwardly, putting our offerings into his hand at once, instead of entering into some friendly small-talk, which Argentine, who stood by, was evidently anxious for. The cake, in consideration, I suppose, of our religious scruples, was not blessed, as is usual, before bringing it to us.

At half-past eight in the evening, Argentine went to her fête, accompanied, at her request, by us. We could not persuade her to go earlier, as she was determined to finish all her work for us, and get our tea ready first. She wore her gay blue print, in all its first gloss and freshness, with short hanging sleeves and lace manchettes; a nice steel brooch, yellow silk gloves, a handkerchief, which I perfumed for her with Eau de Cologne; neat gray brodequins; and her dark hair beautifully done, with its plaited coils behind, and its smooth bands in front. We looked her all over, and agreed that the right effect had been produced: she looked fresh and well-dressed, without being fine; and her happy, lively, but modest looks were in keeping; her personal attractions, besides, are youth, health, a fresh complexion, and animated eyes.

So we set out for the place where the tent had been put up. The ground was laid with planks; benches were set all round; lamps hung from the ceiling; and some thirty people collected and dancing quadrilles—the only dance practised by French country-people—to very lively airs from a double-bass, cornet-à-piston, and violin.

The dancing, I must confess, was more lively than elegant, the usual step being a *galop*, with various attitudes and additions not recognised in a *salon*, and sometimes breaking into a decided romp. The women were generally neat, though not pretty; some in flounced clear muslin, with sashes; most in light-coloured *indienne* or *percaline*. They were generally very quiet; a few, who made themselves remarkable, came, I was told, from Paris or Versailles. The men danced with their hats on, in good time, executing the steps very carefully, and with great energy, but with an entire absence of lightness and grace. They rushed, stamped, kicked, and figured about, till the effect was perfectly grotesque.

At last, to my pleasure, the long quadrille was ended; there was a rest, and then another began to form; and at length the tall young Hippolyte approaches: he takes off his hat, makes a low bow, and murmurs a few words with all the respectful *emproisement* of French gallantry. He offers his arm; Argentine is too shy or too pleased to say anything; but she blushes and smiles, and is led off, looking most modestly happy. And now I am at leisure to notice the rest, and to chat over balls in general, and this in particular, with our Protestant friends, who have just come in, and whom I shall call the Gerards. Among the spectators was the archbishop's negro-servant, whom the old women of the village facetiously call 'M. le Blanc'; he stood up tall, conspicuously black, and even more conspicuously ugly. He was very much at his ease, talking and playing fine gentleman. They offered to introduce him to a damsel in want of a partner; but he answered magnificently: '*Soyez tranquille; je ne veux pas danser*;' and continued his talk. Then there was a *demi-monsieur*, as my young friend Mademoiselle Lucile pronounced him, with much disapprobation, moustached and bearded,

with a gold chain, full of airs, and dancing very disagreeably—probably a Paris bagman. I wanted to see how Argentine performed, and I soon recognised her, looking all modest, natural reserve, dancing quietly and well, and no way conspicuous, except for good-behaviour. I was amused, in the intervals of the dance, to see the young men whispering and flirting, and admiring their partners' bouquets, just as they do in salons.

Mademoiselle Lucile has the true French passion for dancing. She was never regularly taught till last winter, though her sister and she had learned the polka-step merely from seeing it once danced by bears on the stage. I complimented her on the distinguished grace she must have acquired from her *professeur*, M. l'Oura. She has not yet been to any balls; and, indeed, at seventeen there is time before her.

We went away when the room grew hot and the dancing furious. Argentine returned at two o'clock, after an evening of much success, having danced four times with le jeune maçon, besides having promised two more for the next evening, which was to close the fête. She highly disapproved of the manners of the town-importations; and said she never went to public balls at Paris because of those *mauvaises habitudes*, which there could not be escaped from.

ART OF DYEING.

The art of dyeing has been successfully practised in the East Indies, Persia, Egypt, and Syria, from time immemorial. In the Pentateuch, frequent mention is made of linen cloths dyed blue, purple, and scarlet, and of rams' skins dyed red; and the works of the tabernacle, and the vestments of the high-priest, were commanded to be of purple. The Tyrians were, probably, the only people of antiquity who made dyeing their chief occupation and the staple of their commerce. The opulence of Tyre seems to have proceeded, in a great measure, from the sale of its rich and durable purple. So highly prized was this colour, that in the time of Augustus a pound of wool dyed with it cost, at Rome, a sum nearly equal to £30 sterling. . . . In ancient Greece, it does not appear that the art of dyeing was much cultivated. In Rome, it received more attention; but very little is now known of the processes followed by the Romans, such arts being held by them in low estimation. The principal ingredients used by these people were the following:—Of vegetable matters—alkaneet, archil, broom, madder, nutgalls, woad, and the seeds of the pomegranate and of an Egyptian acacia; and of mineral productions—sulphate of iron, sulphate of copper, and a native alum mixed with the former. The progress of dyeing, as of all other arts, was completely stopped in Europe, for a considerable time, by the invasion of the northern barbarians in the fifth century. In the East, the art still continued to flourish, but it did not revive in Europe until towards the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century. One of the places chiefly celebrated for this art was Florence, where, it is said, there were no less than 200 establishments at work in the early part of the fourteenth century. A Florentine dyer, having ascertained in the Levant a method of extracting a colouring principle from the lichens which furnish archil, introduced this on his return, and acquired by its sale an immense fortune. . . . The ancients seem to have attained considerable proficiency in the art of topical dyeing, or of producing coloured patterns on cloths. Homer notices the linen cloths of Sidon as magnificent productions. In India, the art of imparting a tinged pattern to cotton fabric has been practised with great success from a very remote epoch, and it derives its name of calico-printing from Calicut, a town in the province of Malabar, where it was formerly practised on an extensive scale. According to Herodotus, the inhabitants of Caucasus adorned their garments with representations of various animals by means of an aqueous infusion of the leaves of a tree; and the hues thus obtained were said to be so persistent as to be incapable of being removed by washing.—*Muspratt's Chemistry*.

THE DEPARTING VESSEL.

BY CALDER CAMPBELL.

A BARK was gliding through our bay, with banners on the breeze,
And music from the crowded deck rang o'er the rippling seas;

There was no cloud in all the sky, no mist upon the shore,
And yet a moisture filled my eyes—a voice cried: 'Nevermore!'

A voice cried: 'Nevermore, perhaps, shall some on board that ship,

Who leave a land of love in search of wealth far o'er the deep,

Return to dear and kindred hearts, that now are sore and sad,

Though all unselfishly they shew a visage calm or glad.'

Youth leaves us with a laughing lip, for hope is at its core,
And shews successful enterprise upon a glittering shore;
But age upon the voyager looks sadly, for it sees
The grave, that barreth meeting here beneath ancestral trees!

O Mother! take thy last fond look—thy poverty to-day
Shall have one mouth the less to feed, since he hath gone away!

O Mother! cherish yet a hope that Time for thee and him
May bring a welcoming embrace, though now thine eyes are dim!

O Son! the mother's tears that bathe thy cheeks are holy, they

Should purify thy heart from ill—then keep them wet for aye
Within thy memory, there to speak of her whose earnest prayers

May watch and hover o'er thy path 'midst manifold despairs!

The music from that gallant bark, as slowly it recedes
Grows fainter at each onward sweep across the briny meads;
I cannot now discern the tune, whose gay and sparkling tones

Seem strangely mixed with sea-birds' cries and rising ocean's moans.

And as the distant sounds in bursts of song fall on my ear,
Before my wakeful fancy vivid memories appear;

The dying echoes rouse a troop of phantoms at each strain,
And swarms of thoughts, like bees from hives, float upwards from my brain!

I see the shapes of forms beloved flit past me, though I know

That they no longer move in life through life's long walks of woe;

I hear the voices of dear friends, who never more to me
Can speak those accents that gave life a pleasure sweet to see!

The music's last faint cadence, as it comes upon the wind,
Like a dying bird that leaves the sea its grave ashore to find,

Fills all my thoughts with sadness deep, which makes me seem to be

Left lonely and unloved by all who sought or cherished me!
Thus age and sickness summon up dark images, that lend

A morbid colouring to scenes where brightest beauties blend;

No marvel that the solitary wanderer here below
Hears many a dirge that none else hears, sees many a secret woe!

Hopes, wishes, aims, belong to youth—with youth and health they flee,

As fleeteth with yon fleeting ship the music o'er the sea;

In youth we wish and hope—but ah! when age doth o'er us fall,

And care attends our stumbling steps, we fear to wish at all!

TORQUAY.

Printed and Published by W. and R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by JAMES FRASER, 14 D'Olier Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.

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